

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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TROPICAL ATLANTIC COOPERATIVE INVESTIGATIONS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN 1963

Cooperative investigations of the tropical Atlantic Ocean from South America to Africa are set to begin in January 1963, coordinated by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the Department of the Interior reported today.

Proposed by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and accepted and sponsored by the Interagency Committee on Oceanography, this program will explore the equatorial Atlantic, one of the last remaining ocean areas with large stocks of underdeveloped food resources and what appears to be an enormous fishery potential. These fishery resources, so valuable as protein food, are sorely needed by peoples of West Africa and other parts of the world who lack, to a crippling degree, protein in their diet.

Although some research and exploration have been conducted by other nations in the tropical Atlantic, the Bureau's program will be a major fishery and oceanographic research project. It is now under consideration for submission to the Inter-governmental Oceanography Committee as a United States-sponsored international program.

A review of what already is known about the area shows a lack of general knowledge about changes in the aquatic plant and animal life of the area as affected by currents, temperature, and other physical environmental factors. Therefore, the first year's work will be oceanographic research of a general descriptive nature, studying the complex surface currents, variances of water temperature, salinity, weather observations, nutrient content, the role of the Equatorial Undercurrent, and related topics. Pelagic fishery surveys will be carried out during 1964 and 1965, using results from the 1963 studies for experimental design of later work.

Cooperating in these investigations will be several universities, the United States Weather Bureau, the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Department of the Navy. Research vessels from Argentina and Brazil may participate, and expressions of interest have been received from England and France.

Anticipating the need for additional staff and facilities to carry on the greatly expanded work of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries' Washington, D. C., Biological Laboratory in this new program, the laboratory will be moved May 1 to larger quarters in Building 74, Naval Weapons Plant. The laboratory now is at 734 Jackson Place in Washington.

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